



NEWSLETTER OF THE LONDON CHAPTER,  
ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

55 Centre St., London, Ontario N6J 1T4  
(519) 675-7742; Fax: 675-7777



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The speaker for March is Bob Burgar of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. His talk is entitled: Archaeology of the Toronto Region: A view from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Come and join us Thursday March 14<sup>th</sup> at the museum.

It's that time of year again! Time to renew your London Chapter membership. Check your mailing label for the expiry date of your Kewa subscription.

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As always, our meeting will be held at 8 pm at the London Museum of Archaeology, 1600 Attawandaron Road, near the corner of Wonderland & Fanshawe Park Road, in the northwest part of the city.

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# Heye, Where Are You Going With Those Artifacts?

William Fox

Gleaning information concerning Historic Neutral sites from the pages of the early AARO's, one suspects that this (or a more grammatically correct version, with a Gaelic lilt) was a regular expression of David Boyle's. Time and again, Ontario's first Provincial archaeologist visited discovery sites in the Niagara Peninsula, only to find them dug over by "curio collectors", many of whom were American citizens. It is not hard to imagine what might have been lost to these "pot hunters", but it has been impossible to know the extent of the loss with any certainty. Also, one wondered where their booty now resided in the United States. Were the artifacts moldering in a box in "great aunt Matilda's Buffalo residence attic", or had they found their way to a museum or university curatorial facility? Over the last several years, a partial answer to this question has presented itself to the writer, and it is this that I wish to share with other researchers of the Ontario archaeological record.

## THE HISTORIC CONTEXT

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of intense interest in the Native peoples and antiquities of North America, as evidenced in the flood of information published in the United States (ie. Smithsonian Institution annual reports) and Canada (ie. Annual Archaeological Report for Ontario). Major institutions like the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto were assembling their collections through the work of staff anthropologists, the acquisition of private collections, and through artifact exchanges with other institutions. Public interest in local antiquities grew as more land was cleared for agricultural and industrial activities, exposing a wide range of archaeological sites. Ossuary excavating "bees" were at least as popular as barn raising bees in mid-nineteenth century southern Ontario. Particularly when richly endowed late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Iroquoian cemeteries were uncovered, hoards of "curio seekers" would descend on the site. Collections such as Charles Hirschfelder's, now at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and George Allison's, now at the Royal Ontario Museum, include some of the artifacts recovered from Historic Neutral sites during the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

One of the North American "vortices" of such material was the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, established in New York City by George Gustav Heye in 1916. This well to do engineer and banker began his collecting career in 1897 and has been referred to as "a great vacuum cleaner of a collector" (Small 2000: 18). Anyone who has reviewed his museum's eclectic *Indian Notes and Monographs* series will appreciate that this is no overstatement. Heye's museum became part of the Smithsonian in 1990, and some of his collections are displayed in the National Museum of the American Indian, George Gustav Heye Center which opened in Manhattan in 1994 (Small 2000: 18). The remainder is in the process of a move to the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, which should be completed in 2004.

One of the anthropologists supported by George Heye was a Native American by the name of Alanson Skinner. Skinner did some excellent ethnographic research among such groups as the Menominee, and also had an interest in the antiquities of Ontario. He undertook some fieldwork in the province and also published a number of short articles concerning artifacts from Ontario (Skinner 1920 and 1926). Certainly, Canadian archaeologists such as William Wintemberg (1926: 41) were well aware of Skinner's work and the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation collections. Perhaps, some of Canada's early twentieth century researchers traveled to New York City to study Heye's collections; however, only future archival research can document this possibility. The archives of the present National Museum of the American Indian contains Heye correspondence identifying the individuals from whom he purchased the artifacts, as discussed below.

While the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian holds Ontario archaeological artifacts from Lake of the Woods to the west to Rideau Lake in the east, and the Kennakajig River in the north to Essex County in the south, the items relevant to this article derive from early seventeenth century Neutral sites. The following is an attempt to correlate observations by David Boyle, with collections now held by the Smithsonian. Some are more evident than others, and only future archival research into the Heye papers can further clarify any connections.

### *Point Abino*

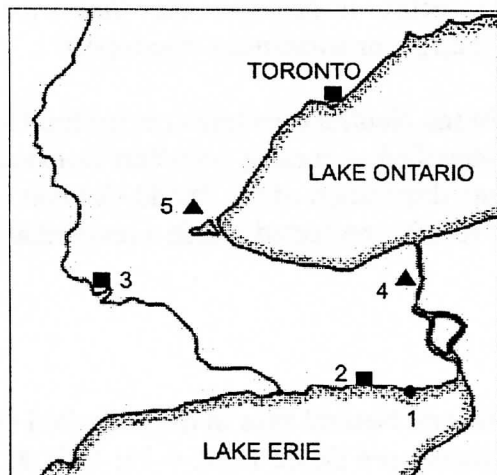
"The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of June I spent in the Township of Humberstone, a few miles east of Port Colborne, where, from information furnished me by Miss Emma Crosson, teacher, I was led to understand that an ossuary had been discovered a short time previously. The same young lady also presented the Institute with three well preserved skulls from the burial place in question.

I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with Mr. Cyrenius Bearsse, of Sherkston, himself an enthusiastic amateur in Archaeology, and he kindly accompanied me to the spot in question, within a short distance of the Lake Erie shore.

The ossuary was found to occupy a position almost in the centre of a piece of low lying ground, about ten acres in extent, and nearly surrounded by a ridge of sand hills from 20 to 30 feet high.

Owing to the promiscuous way in which the bones lay, it was well nigh impossible to estimate how many skeletons had been deposited, but the number was probably not far from fifty. Notwithstanding the Indian mode of burial, many of the skulls seem to be those of whites, but until proper measurements have been made nothing on this point can be stated with certainty.

I was informed that a fine stone pipe had been taken from near the margin of the pit, and was in the possession of Mr. Carroll, of Buffalo, whose men are engaged in shipping sand to that city." (Boyle 1888: 11).



**Figure 1. Site Locations Referenced in Text**

Twelve artifacts from the William L. Bryant collection labeled “Point Abino” evidently derive from an Historic Neutral site, as they include glass, bone, and stone beads and a shell gorget. These artifacts could well derive from a mortuary site; perhaps that referenced above, or perhaps from the habitation site on Point Abino investigated by Boyle in 1890 (Boyle 1891: 21-23 and Killan 1983: 124-126) (Figure 1: 1). Bryant appears to have been an avid collector of ethnographic materials and some archaeological artifacts from “all over the U.S. and also Europe” (S. Demb Pers. comm. 2002). His collection was presented to the museum by Harmon W. Hendricks of New York City (a major benefactor supporting George Heye’s museum - M.J. Lenz Pers. comm. 2002).

### ***Port Colborne - Tennessee Avenue Site***

“On the 12<sup>th</sup> of August (1889) Mr. Jas. Bain and myself constituted a self-appointed delegation of the Institute, and accepted an invitation from Mr. Peter McIntyre, captain of a Memphis (Tenn.) camping club near Port Colborne, to examine a quantity of Indian relics that had been discovered when digging a hole to plant a flag-pole.

I had previously written to Mr. McIntyre hoping to secure the specimens for preservation in our collection. His reply indicated uncertainty as to the ultimate disposal of the find, but expressed a wish that representatives of the Institute should, meanwhile, see what had been unearthed. We were received with genuine southern hospitality by the members, numbering about eighty, of the “Solid Comfort Club”, and had the pleasure of examining several skulls, a few clay pots, some clay pipes, wampum, stone tomahawks, and a considerable quantity of material of European manufacture including glass beads, iron and copper bracelets, and iron hatchets. While rejoicing heartily with our American friends over the happy discovery they had made, our pleasure was not unmingled with a few degrees of envy, especially when we contemplated the possibility of these objects being taken away from the province, although we have reason to hope that some, or all, of them will yet find a suitable depository with us.

As illustrative of the value set upon articles of an archaeological nature by Americans, it may be stated that almost immediately after the discovery was made at “Solid Comfort” camp, a highly influential deputation consisting of “honorable”, municipal officials, and medical gentlemen arrived

from a neighboring city in the United States to secure if possible, the "find" for their museum." (Boyle 1889: 18-19). See also Boyle (1907:12,15) for subsequent discoveries.

There is a brass kettle (a common grave offering in Historic Neutral cemeteries) in the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian collections identified as coming from Port Colborne and, needless to say, Boyle's hopes concerning the ultimate disposition of the "Solid Comfort" camp artifacts were not fulfilled. Fortunately, the cemetery remains protected within a residential lot on Tennessee Avenue in Port Colborne (Figure 1: 2).

### ***Brantford Area Sites***

There are substantial collections (799 pieces) from Historic Neutral sites in the Brantford (Figure 1: 3) vicinity (probably Sealey and Walker, among others - see Boyle 1900: 6-11; 1901:8; 1902: 13,17,18; 1903: 8-11; 1904: 92-95; 1905: 45-46, 50-52; and Waugh 1903); including, shell, glass, and bone beads, stone and ceramic pipes, numerous bone and antler tools, complete and fragmentary ceramic vessels, and a variety of lithic and European metal artifacts. No totals by specific site can be provided, based on the Smithsonian catalogue information, although the collector is identified as Mr. E.C. Waters, who provided artifacts to Boyle in 1891 (Boyle 1892: 20-21). The range of artifacts provided to the Canadian Institute (including a late Glen Meyer ceramic vessel - Boyle 1892: Figure 1) indicates that Waters was collecting from a wide range of cultural sites, perhaps including the Cooper village site (Glen Meyer) and Cooper ossuary (Historic Neutral - looted by persons unknown in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) in Cainsville.

### ***St. David's Cemetery***

Rowland Orr, in the Annual Archaeological Report 1911 segment entitled "Queenston Heights", quotes David Boyle as follows, concerning his final Ontario field work on the former Dorchester farm near St. David's in April of 1908 (Figure 1: 4):

"The discovery was made by the men who were engaged in "stripping" the ground, that is, removing the surface, to get at the underlying coarse, sharp sand, which is of excellent quality for building purposes, and has been worked close by, to a depth of a hundred and seventy feet. Mr. Case, with the co-operation of Dr. E. Jessop, M.P.P., secured from Mr. Lowery permission for this Department to examine the ground, and to appropriate anything we might find for Provincial Museum purposes.

It was somewhat unfortunate for us that we did not receive the information at an earlier date, for, on reaching the ground, we found it occupied by a large number of men and boys - some even from the United States - who were making havoc of the graves. These people were merely curiosity hunters, and as a matter of course, were quite successful in finding and carrying away a considerable number of excellent specimens, but they also succeeded in putting the ground in such a condition that no one could make any intelligent examination of it." (Orr 1911: 9).



Boyle did manage to obtain glass and shell beads, a range of marine shell artifacts, several ceramic vessels, and a native copper celt during his visit to the site (Orr 1911: 10-11, 78-80, 82-83, 94-95). Subsequently, three pipes from the site (Berryman farm) were presented to the museum by C.A. Case of St. Catharines. William Ellis of Niagara Falls donated a pedestal base of a ceramic vessel in 1915 (Orr 1915: 91-92, 113); and in 1925, Case donated a complete ceramic vessel (Orr 1927: 84). A local collector diary states that the Dorchester farm was also known as the Berryman farm (Case nd.).

The second largest Smithsonian collection from a single Ontario site derives from the "St. David's Neutral Cemetery", and shell, glass, bone, and stone beads, ceramic pipes, a copper celt (Skinner 1920), and 6 complete ceramic vessels are among the 87 artifacts purchased from local collectors ("presented by William J. Mackay" of Niagara Falls, New York and "collected by A. C. Case", presumably of St. Catharines, Ontario). Nine pieces presented by Mackay are identified as "Brock Monument"; including shell, glass, and bone beads, as well as a "Rosary Frag", may or may not derive from nearby St. David's. On the other hand, there may be another Historic Neutral site beneath the National Historic Site park lands at the eastern end of Queenston Heights, situated in a similar topographic setting to the Thorold village (Noble 1984: 14) to the west and the Kienuka site in New York State to the east (White 1961: 54-56).

### *Lake Medad Site(s)*

The largest collection is from the poorly documented Lake Medad site(s) (Figure 1: 5), which were looted in the 1870's (labels on two whelk shells in the Hirschfelder collection provide dates of June 2<sup>nd</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup> 1874). This site was well known to local collectors (Charlton 1882: 52-54, Wodell 1897: 74-91, Smith 1897: 34-36, Orr 1912: 92, and Wood 1915: 13-14) and U.S. researchers (Houghton 1915) and was variously identified as the Jesuit village of Kandoucho (Waugh 1903: 78) and La Salle's Tinawatawa (Charlton 1882: 52-53, Martin 1915: 27; see also the exchange of letters between Charles Hirschfelder and Arthur Harvey in the Toronto Mail, October through December 1885). Thus, it is surprising that Boyle appears never to have visited Lake Medad, and only lists some glass beads from the site (Boyle 1893: 14).

The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian collection comprises 1880 pieces (2152, including the "vicinity of Lake Medad" material), obtained from a J.O. McGregor and L.J. Mullock of Waterdown; including, shell, glass, bone and stone beads, stone and ceramic pipes, iron axes, antler harpoons, turtle shell rattles, hide fragments, complete and fragmentary ceramic vessels, and a variety of lithic artifacts ranging in age from Archaic to Historic Neutral. According to Joseph Smith (1897: 41) "The private collections of Indian antiquities of Dr. J.O. McGregor, of Waterdown, Mr. George Allison, of the same place, and the Messrs. Mullock, in the near vicinity, are well worthy the attention of students of Indian character. These collections are carefully classified and arranged, and contain, both as to quality and quantity, as large an assortment of relics as are found in similar collections in our public museums." While the Heye Foundation collection catalogue does note a "steatite carving representing dance mask" which was "presented by G.A. Allison", I am sure that David Boyle would have been pleased that his museum was able to acquire a considerable portion of the Allison collection in 1915, including some fine specimens from the Lake Medad site.

## CONCLUSION

This brief article attempts to bring an important collection of Ontario archaeological artifacts to the attention of a wider audience of researchers; as well as, place its establishment in historical context. Numerous artifacts deriving from what is now the Province of Ontario reside in institutions throughout the United States and Europe, and how many are in private collections outside Canada we may never know. I am reminded of the lore about a well-known southern Ontario collector who was encouraged to guide some U.S. collectors with metal detectors to Historic Neutral sites such as Walker and Sealey around 1960. Apparently, they obtained dozens of iron trade axes from each site, provided their guide with more than a few drinks, and disappeared back across the border with all the “loot”.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was quite common for museums to exchange collections from their local areas. One assumes that this was intended to provide patrons with a broader historical perspective; however, one wonders how successful this may have been, given the specific items traded (ie. black shale pebble pendants). These activities, plus the “culling” of collections for museum management purposes, have limited the assemblage of materials presently available to researchers studying collections in various institutions.

I believe that there is much to be learned in bringing these old collections back together, figuratively speaking. Granted, the provenience provided for many specimens is limited in detail or even hazy, as to site of origin. Such items should be regarded with caution by researchers; however, the Medad disc pipe provides an example of how archival research can be used to strengthen the provenience data and, hence, value of long curated specimens. It simply requires the dedication of time and the support of museum staff (which I have found to be very helpful, on average). Obviously, the process can only begin once researchers are aware of the existence of these collections. This applies to U.S. researchers, as well as Canadian. I wonder how many southeastern U.S. archaeologists know about the Clarence Moore collection at the Royal Ontario Museum? For that matter, how many European researchers know about the Palaeolithic “type site” collections formerly held by the Geology Department at the same institution? The value of bringing together and publishing older collections is well attested in the seminal Wray series volumes published by the Rochester Museum and Science Center, which provide an enduring foundation for future Seneca studies (Wray et al. 1991).

In conclusion and with apologies to George Heye for the cheeky title of this article, I would like to thank the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian for continuing to curate a priceless collection of Ontario archaeological materials for the benefit of all. No one need apologize for the actions of the collection’s creator (Small 2000: 18), given the unique heritage value of his “labour of love”.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to thank William Fitzgerald, who, over the last year, has shared collections information received from the Museum of the American Indian in 1987 and 2001. That data, plus my research

into the distribution of disc pipes in Ontario, has served as the catalyst for this paper. Supplementary provenience information was kindly provided by Ann McMullen, Patricia Nietfeld, Mary Jane Lenz, and Sarah Demb of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Archival information relating to the history of the Medad disc pipe was provided by Jennifer Antes of the Museum of Natural History, Roger Williams Park in Providence, Rhode Island. The latter allowed the writer to pinpoint the discovery site of the famous specimen which was traded to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in 1920 (L. Stancari Pers. comm. 2000). Jean-Luc Pilon of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and Mima Kapches of the Royal Ontario Museum provided access to nineteenth century collections from the Lake Medad site. Charles Garrad supplied information on the Annual Archaeological Reports for Ontario, and Sharon Hick of the Royal Ontario Museum Library kindly assisted with several references. Finally, Stewart Leslie of Hamilton provided valuable historical reference works, as always, in support of my research, and put me in touch with Margaret Houghton (Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library) who kindly sent copies of some rare nineteenth century manuscripts. None of the above are responsible in any other manner for the contents of this paper, least of all its title!

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Total Bank Balances as of December 31/01*			8,895.41
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<b>Total Revenues</b>		<b>2,495.43</b>	<b>👉 2,495.43</b>
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Bank Balance as of January 1, 2001			8,794.73
Revenues for 2000			+2,495.43
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Expenditures for 2001			-2,394.75
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